YOGI SRI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATIAR

THE REVELATIONS OF

SAINT MEIKANDAR

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THE REVELATIONS OF
SAINT MEIKANDAR

BY

YOGI SRI SHUDDHÀNANDA BHARATIAR

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

HERE is an original synthetic treatise upon the '*Twelve Aphorisms*' revealed to a perfect Saint *Meikandar*. The Tamil word 'Meikandar' means '*Sathya Dharshi*' or the '*Truth-seer*' who, being a perfect Yogi and a Divine Jnani, speaks from within the highest and the purest TRUTH about the three eternal entities—*God, Soul,* and the *Universe.* This book guides the seekers and thinkers of the Eternal Truth, who strive to master the quintessence of the '*Agama Siddhanta*' and '*Tantra*' works of our ancient sages. Critically viewed, metaphysics deserves a very subtle interpretative

medium of expression, and our author exquisitely levels his medium to the spiritual interior of higher experience.

Yogi Sri Shuddhananda Bharatiar, the author of this spiritual interpretation, is a poet, playwright, critic, and a linguist too, who is ever living in Divine Communion. He has mastered all the religions and the various systems of yogas and philosophies, both ancient and modern; and he has written a number of soul-elevating books in English, French, and Tamil, which would be published in our series.

We ardently hope that the public will patronise our endeavours.

RAMACHANDRAPURAM,
June 15, 1943.

ANBU NILAYAM.

CHAPTER I

COME COLLECTIVELY

MAN seeks the fountain of *Bliss*. But he wanders after mirages. He wants peace. But he treads the path of bondage. He pants for liberation. But vital desire entangles him in misery. His pragmatic intellect dreams of world empires and material millenniums. It divines the laws of the physical nature. Science in its hands plays a double game of construction and destruction. It makes machines and engines for the human convenience. At the same

time it bombs and torpidoes human existence. It conspires to play at chess the lives of millions. It makes humanity food for powder. Bombs drown the Bible-voice. Infernal smoke chokes the free breath of man. Man has after all become a weaponed *asura.* Saviours have come and gone. But the world has not yet been saved from the ferocious beast in man. Blind passion, quenchless desire, vital egoism, pitiless selfishness and falsehood have degraded man and made him a prisoner in the hell of misery and ignorance.

Is this life? Is this man's destiny? What is man? What is the world? Who lives in the body? How did it come? Neither life nor the world is in our control. Who moves them both? The soul seeks a Bliss, a freedom, a light, a peace beyond the dark turmoils of life. How to attain that Bliss of Freedom? Listen to Saint Thayumanavar who calls you:

> "COME collectively, O humanity, to realise the Supreme. Tread not the path of falsehood. Come,

> then, let us find the Divine Presence. It shall give us liberation. Come united; limitless flood of supreme Bliss overflows everywhere. It is the Bliss of the Unique *One* that plays as the *Many*. He is the Life of lives dancing in hearts. Come, let us seek love to attain His Grace. The time is now!"

Here is the end and aim of life. Man lives in his vital egoism, forgetting the God in him and in the universe. He trumpets over a little conquest of the elemental nature. He is quite ignorant of himself and his Lord. That is why he suffers and commits suicide with his boasted intellect. He has much externalised life and must hence internalise it, ingather his mind, and be *centre in,* instead of *centre out.* He must pass through a course of spiritual evolution, touch his soul and attain its Lord. How to do it? Our seers show the way.

CHAPTER II

SIDDHANTA

VEDAS and Agamas are the two eternal sources of Divine Knowledge that lead man to God. 'Veda' means the knowledge that leads man to the Divine. 'Agama' means Divine approach. Both accept the divine essence in man, and the goal of life as the Divine *at-one-ment*. Both are the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the Supreme Truth. The Vedas teach us about the ceremonies conducive to mental purification, the modes of divine worship

according to individual predilections, and throw light upon the path of Knowledge that leads to the Divine. The Upanishads are the brain of the Vedas. They are rapturous and spontaneous hymns of self-realisation. They are the crown and goal of knowledge, otherwise called the Vedanta. Vedanta teaches: "Thou art That, Thou art the Brahman. Be That." And with that, it sinks into silence.

It is very difficult for the imperfect man full of mental and vital defects to "be That", to be divine at a stroke. There is much muddling of the Truth of the Soul and that of the Divine by the human egoism. Another clear path is necessary to purify him and lead him gently to Divinity. That path is Siddhanta which is the crown of the Agamas. Agama was taught by the supreme Shiva to His Shakti Parvathi first, and then to the saints. It is said in the Tantra Tatwa that the strong sturdy man of the Satya-Yuga or the Golden Age, lost his spiritual stamina through the cyclic

influence. He became the imperfect, sin-laden, devitalised weakling of the Kali Yuga or the Iron Age. The Divine Shakti, the Universal Mother prayed to Her blessed Lord Shiva to reveal Her the means of self-culture and devotion by which this world, the brood of Her creative incubation, can once again be alive with a super race, strong and enlightened. The Supreme Divine, out of the vastness of His Grace, disclosed to the universal Shakti, the secrets of the Agama Siddhanta. The Agama Siddhanta reveals a graded path for the perfection of man and woman. It is supremely useful for the harmonious life of a nation. All the temple worships from Cape to Kailash are essentially based on it. The Agama Siddhanta is a veritable encyclopaedic science to which a galaxy of writers have contributed admirable works in Tamil and Sanskrit, the two sister languages of India in which her spiritual treasure is stored up. All the Tantric works — Maharnava, Kularnava, Tantra

Tatva, Sarada Tilakam, Janarnava, Prapanchasara, Shad-chakra-Nirupana etc., are the offshoots of Agama Siddhanta. Tirumandiram, Devaram, Tiruvachakam and a number of works in Tamil expound the Truths of Siddhanta. There are twenty-eight big works on Agama. Raorava Agama is important for our purpose. We find in the Raorava Agama, twelve revelatory verses which briefly explain all the Truths of Siddhanta. They have been collected under the title, "*Siva Jnana Bhodam*" i.e., the knowledge of Shiva. It is believed that the Lord of Knowledge facing south, Lord Dakshinamurthi, revealed this knowledge of Shiva to the four great Rishis—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara. What the Gita is to the Mahabharata, and Brahmasutra to Vedanta, Sivajnana Bhodam is to Siddhanta. It is the quintessence of the vast science of the individual, the universal, and the transcendent realities.

CHAPTER III

MEIKANDAR

SIVAJNANA BHODAM taught by Lord Shiva was handed down to the generation of holy saints. The one that had it *first* was Nandi Deva; and the saint that had it *last* and gave it to the world was the immaculate Meikanda Deva, the Truth-Seer.

About twenty miles from Panruti Station (S. I. R.), there is a village called Tiruvennai-nalloor. It is situated on the banks of the river Pennar. There was a devotee

in this village by name Achuta. He had no child, and did penance to have one at the temple of Lord Swetavana at Tiruvenkadu in the Tanjore District. The Lord granted him a divine child. The father named it after his tutelary deity as Swetavanam. The child was all silent. It had no earthly desire. It did not even cry of hunger and thirst. Its pet hobby was to play with a Shivalingam made of clay. Its delightful preoccupation was to contemplate upon this supreme symbol of Shiva and Shakti. One day Saint Paranjyoti, on his way from Kailas to the abode of Sage Agastya, happened to observe this child absorbed in the meditation of Shivalingam. Divinity glowed through his silence. The saint fondled the child lovingly, awakened power by a touch of grace, changed its name as *Meikandar* or *Satya-Dharshi* (Truth-Seer), taught Sivajnana Bhodam, asked the child to propagate it and went his way. After this Upadesa, Meikandar remained all absorbed in silent meditation, before the image of Ganesa at Tiruvennai-nalloor.

Lord Ganesa illumined and inspired him. Meikandar opened his mouth at the opportune moment in his fifth year to expound the deep knowledge contained in the pithy verses of Sivajnana Bhodam. His silvery voice, irrefutable arguments, clear logic, sublime words, spiritual fervour and the halo of divinity that radiated from his personality, attracted to his feet the wise and the erudite. The greatest of them was no other than his family Guru, Arul-nandi Sivacharya, far famed for his learning and erudition. It happened that the disciples of this learned Brahmin deserted him day by day, to the feet of Saint Meikandar. The enraged scholar rushed to the presence of Meikandar to baffle him in logic. At the same moment, Meikandar was exhorting his disciples on egoism. "How will it be Egoism?" ranted the brahmin. Meikandar pointed a finger at him (meaning thereby, 'Egoism will be quite like you!') and kept on teaching his disciples. The brahmin was at once transformed. He fell at the feet of Meikandar and became his foremost dis-

ciple. Under the direction and inspiration of the Guru, Arulnandi Sivacharya wrote an extensive commentary on Sivajnana Bhodam in verses, and his commentary was called Sivajnana Siddhi. He also wrote another smaller work in verse extolling Meikandar and his teachings.

Sivajnana Siddhi is a perfect book on logic and metaphysics. It deals in detail with all the prevalent systems of religion and philosophy, refutes their arguments and throws a dazzling light upon the Truth of Truths contained in the teachings of Meikandar.

The Tamil *Sutras* of Meikandar are deeper and wider in significance than the Sanskrit Sutras. They are undoubtedly Meikandar's own words. So we follow the Tamil version in this book. Meikandar's Sivajnana Bhodam consists of twelve terse sutras, full of deep meaning in every line. They are divided into two parts, general and particular. Each part is further divided into two chapters so that, like the Brahma-sutra

of Vyasa, Sivajnana Bhodam consists of four chapters. The three entities, their nature and relationship, the mode of attaining their intimate knowledge, the real goal of the human soul—these are the topics of the four chapters. Meikandar enunciates his theories, proves them by proper and cogent arguments and brings striking analogies to clarify his apophthegms.

Meikandar attained the final beatitude after fulfilling his holy mission. He is said to have flourished about the year 1200 A.D. His disciple Arulnandi Sivacharya taught Sivajnana Bhodam to Maraijnana Sambanda who in turn taught that supreme knowledge to Umapati Sivacharya. Umapati Sivacharya was a distinguished scholar and devotee. He wrote about eight works expounding the Truths revealed by Meikandar. Out of them "*Sivaprakasam*," written in an easy flowing style, is very popular.

The Saiva Adhinams or Monasteries of the Tamil-Nad preserve to this day the know-

ledge taught by Meikandar along with the hymns and words of a galaxy of Saivite saints. Sri Nama-shivaya Desikar, the founder of Tiruvavaduturai Mutt, was the seventh spiritual descendant of Meikandar. The Acharyas of that Mutt are known as the line of Meikanda. They are called Meikanda Santadigal or Pandara Sannidigal. Another powerful centre of Saivite culture is the " Dharmapuram Adhinam ". It also draws its descent from Meikandar. Tiruvavaduturai and Dharmapuram adinams are sister institutions founded within a difference of about fifty years by the disciples of Sri Arul Nama Shivaya. Both are the torch-bearers of the Truth revealed by Saint Meikandar. There are fourteen books in all, written under the inspiration of Saint Meikandar by several authors who owed him their homage. They are called " Meikanda Sastras " or "Siddhanta Sastras ". The line of saints representing Meikandar are known as Pandara Sannidis or the manifestations of Meikandar.

Shivajnana Muni:

THE Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt has produced many a poet and eminent philosopher. The greatest of them was undoubtedly Sri Shivajnana Muni. He was a contemporary of the great Vedantin, Sri Sadasiva Brahmam, and the great Siddhantin, Saint Thayumanavar. He was a towering genius, an unequalled scholar of Tamil and Sanskrit, a flawless grammarian, an inspired poet, a keen logician, a tireless writer and an enlightened thinker. He renounced the world even as a school boy, and took orders. He was initiated by Velappa Desikar, a saint of the Mutt. He lived in the Mutt and perfected his knowledge. From Kanchipuram, he wrote many valuable works. The greatest of them was his commentary on Sivajnana Bhodam known as the " Dravida Bhashyam " or " Sivajnana Bhashyam ". It is the *magnum opus* of Siddhanta. Sivajnana Muni lived up to the year 1785 A.D. He was a peerless scholar and a brave fighter for the cause of Siddhanta. At the same time he was a very humble devotee of

Shiva. He used to sleep with *Tiruvachakam* (the inspired hymns of Saint Manikkavachakar) upon his bosom, *Periapuranam* (the book containing in verses the life and acts of 63 saints) and *Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam* (the book of Divine plays) on both sides. He was once requested to be the pontiff of the Tiruvavaduturai Mutt. He declined the offer, saying: "I am born to *worship* and not to be *worshipped*". These commentators of Eternal Truth are called Santana-Acharyas. The inspired authors of devotional hymns like Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavachakar are called Samaya Acharyas,—those who have propagated and won victory for the Saivite Religion. The fourteen Sastras inspired by the Sivajnana Bhodam, the eleven books of inspired hymns and psalms, the Upanishads of Thayumanavar, Patnathar, and Arul Jyoti Ramalingar, the Tiruppugal of Arunagirinathar form the spiritual treasures of Saivism.

"*The Revelations of Meikandar*" is the basic work of Saiva Siddhanta.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

THESE are days of equality when everyone proclaims that his faith is universal. While declaring his, he cries down the faith of another. The selfish egoism of man cannot tolerate the better. That is why we see so many opposite camps in religions. Religions have shed so much of the human blood, and have so much disturbed the peace of humanity that people are tired of them and have lost confidence in their healing power. The spirit is lost; only the dull

formality lingers on. The pearls of life have lost the string of the spirit. Man has lost God-consciousness and lives in body-consciousness; he lives for the stomach; he acts, impelled by the divided mentality fed with the *I*-and-*Mine* consciousness. That is why he suffers from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. That is why he could not find the peace embedded in his own heart. Mere books and lectures will not do. Man must live in the Truth. He must obey a higher power and submit to its guidance. There is a Power indeed that opens the eye of the ignorant soul and leads it from darkness to light, from sin to virtue, from humanity to divinity. It is the Divine Power. That Power is one with the Divine. It is His manifesting force, the rays of His supreme Light. It is through that gracious power that the Supreme, featureless, immaculate, immortal Divine is omnipresent, omnipotent and omnific. This Power or Shakti is the Conscious Force in everything, from the inert stone to the mental man. Existence is a progressive evolution

of consciousness which sleeps in the stone, feels in the plant, senses in the animal and thinks in man. In the mental man this consciousness is covered by egoism, desire and results of actions. He is like an ore from the mine. The ore has to pass through the fire of love and worship before it becomes gold. The gold has again to be purified in the flames of the Divine Grace before it can become a shining jewel of divinity. The soul of man has to pass from bondage to freedom, falsehood to truth, ignorance to knowledge. The *Jiva* in short, has to attain Shiva by a steady process of evolution. That is its consummation.

The one philosophy that leads the human soul to its divine consummation, through graded evolutive process, is the Siddhanta. Many at present know about the Vedanta which regards the self as the Brahman, the world as an illusion, and self-immersion as the highest state of consciousness. Time has come again for the world to know about the other dynamic system of philosophy, which is the great heritage of India. Sid-

dhanta is an ancient system of philosophy. Even now, consciously or unconsciously, a majority of Indians follow it. Most of the Dravidians are Siddhantins. The temple worship from cape to mount in this land of shrines is based upon siddhanta.

Siddhanta is a largely synthetic philosophy, all-inclusive and towering above all, as the unique system which leads the soul step by step to Shivahood. It includes all other religions from atheism to theism, from the most rank materialism to an absolute monism. It considers all religions as so many steps necessary for the evolution of the soul. It lags behind no modern philosophy which speaks of evolution, monad, *elan vital* etc. It is the most perfect treatise on the triple entities of God, soul and the universe. It is the real Advaita which purifies the soul and unites it with God, like salt in water, fire in red-hot iron, and juice in the fruit. It does not deny the objective reality. It does not pull life off the Spirit violently for the sake of

sudden salvation. It uses body, mind, and earthly enjoyments as a process of purification through experience. It throws a clear light upon the cosmic reality, and explains in unequivocal terms the play of the Divine Grace in the universe. It does not run away from Nature. It faces the physical, vital and mental nature, uses it in the processes of purifying the lust-and-ego-laden soul. Like a gentle mother, it takes the human soul from the objective to the subjective realisation, from the separative ego to cosmic consciousness. It begins with moral discipline, worship and disinterested service. It traverses the field of Yoga, and rises to the height of knowledge where the Jiva attains Shivahood. It is a synthesis of the triple path of Knowledge, Love, and Work. From top to toe, it is equal-visioned. Its Grace is for all without any caste or race difference. It equally adores Nanda the harijan, Kannappa the hunter, Nilakanta the potter, Karaikal Ammai the Vaisya saintess, Mangayarkarasi the Pandya queen, Appar the Vellala, Sundarar

the Adisaiva, Sambandar the young brahmin, and Manikkavachakar the brahmin minister; for through all these souls runs one stream of Divine Bliss.

Let us now go to the Revelations of Meikandar, the quintessence of his philosophy.

CHAPTER V

THE SUPREME HARA

REVELATION ONE:

He, She, It—These are the three terms in which the cosmic entity is spoken of. This cosmos undergoes three changes—birth, growth, and death—triple functions. It appears, stays, and disappears; but it reappears by dint of the ego-consciousness which binds it. He who ends it, is its origin. He, Hara is the

Supreme Master: so say the seers of knowledge.

We see the world living and moving and changing. We see beings in the terms of masculine, feminine and neuter. Even like the succession of images on a silver screen, these beings and objects come, live and go, and return, taking forms. For a picture-show, the screen and the reels alone are not enough. There is someone behind the curtain who directs the show and again there is a dynamo that effects the movement. Still further there are live actors and factors whose shadows are the images on the screen. Even so, there are mysterious causes behind this universe which undergoes the triple changes of birth, living and decay. The pot has a potter, the art an artist, the jewel a jeweller, and the universe a Unique Master. He is the efficient cause of the universe. His Will or Shakti is its instrumental cause. Maya, the force of multiplication and the objective consciousness, is the material cause. The Maya, moved by the Cosmic Force or

Chit-Shakti of the Divine, appears as the body of names and forms as the organs of thought and feelings, as the material world and sensations and enjoyments. All beings, in their successive evolution, end in Hara and emerge from Him. He, who ends things, begins them too. Hara, the supreme Lord, is the sun of immutable reality, ever as He is. Just as sunrise awakens the active world, so also the very presence of the Supreme Lord provokes the action of His Divine Energy, awakens the cosmic forces, and turns the wheel of evolution. The acts of creation, preservation, destruction, dissolution and recreation go on spontaneously before His very presence by His Will Power. Beings emanate from His Will and return and dissolve into His cosmic Will during the time of dissolution. Hara is like a field: the crops of cosmic existence grow, taking seed in Karma nurtured by His Shakti. The role of births and deaths is a necessary process in the purification and the evolution of the souls. They are acts of Divine mercy.

CHAPTER VI

THE SHAKTI AND SIVADVAITAM

REVELATION TWO:

He is one with souls; yet He is Himself, unattached, beyond all. He is identified with His will-power, His knowledge-force in inseparable union. Through this force He pervades all and submits souls to birth and death, allowing them to eat the fruits of their dual acts.

(*a*) THE SHAKTI:

The Divine is the supreme Master of the universal mechanism. His Shakti is its

driving force. He is like the Sun. His Shakti is His rays. Just like the rays, He is inseparable from His Shakti. All beings are like bubbles illumined by His luminous Energy. Souls are ignorant, feeble, helpless, obscure, and bound by desire and egoism. They have to pass through a succession of birth, life-experience and death before they can be pure enough for the dawn of Grace. Even this crucial process is done not by the individual will, but by the Divine Will, which is Shakti. God is one with the Soul, like life in the body, salt in the brine, light in the sight, sound in a word, like "A" in letters, like fragrance in flowers. He pervades all thus, through His Conscious Force. Volition, Action, and Consciousness are the threefold manifestations of His Para-Shakti, the Supreme Force. The Forces of volition and action, *Icha-Shakti* and *Kriya-Shakti,* evolve the world of beings; His Conscious Force, *Jnana Shakti* or *Chit Shakti,* gives life to embodied beings, and links them to the Divine Grace. Man is

like a paddy seed of which the soul is grain, husk body, bran bondage of impurities, and sprout Karma. Past acts fructify in the present, and the present acts form seeds of the future birth. On account of its bondage with ignorance, the soul could not commune with the Divine. Just as a washerman mixes dirty clothes with fuller's earth and beats them clean upon a stone, the Divine Grace gives the dirty soul a body, a mind to be conscious of the body, a world for its enjoyment, and makes it eat the results of its good and bad Karmas. The soul is like an ore fresh from the bowels of earth. The Divine Grace throws it repeatedly into the furnace of material existence, to clear off the dross, and make it pure and shining. The Divine Will sets on the wheel of Karma and drives the cosmic mechanism. It is only by the Divine Grace that the soul can find liberation from the wheel of Karma and rebirths. Soul identifying itself with the body and impure mind, suffers bondages. Soul, detaching itself from them and finding its identity with the

Lord through His Grace, becomes free. Just as rust is coexistent with copper, the stain of lust and egoism is inborn in the soul. So it should incessantly pray for the Pure One, the Supreme Liberator, and melt itself into love for His Grace. That is the only way left for its atonement.

Just as the fragrance of a flower is borne by the breeze, the soul is borne to next birth by the Karma accumulated in its subtle body (Sukshma Sarira, i.e., mind, ego, intellect and emotive centre). So mental purity is necessary for any devotion. Prayer, meditation, chanting, bath in holy waters, company of saints, service to the guru, temple worship, gift to the poor, are all means of mental and vital purification.

(*b*) SIVADVAITAM:

The Divine is in all through His Chit-Shakti, and yet above all. He is not bound to anything, and nothing can stain His unique purity. The ether is in all through the air, but is free from all. The sunlight

radiates everywhere. It paints earth-life; it opens the lotus; it draws vapoury yarn from the waters, weaves rain clouds which clothe earth in green and gold. The rain cherishes plants which sustain creatures. Doing so many things by the spontaneous radiation of its rays, the sun remains ever unaffected, silent, a calm witness up the sky. Even so the Supreme Shiva rests as He is, and the universal play is directed by His Conscious Force moved by His very presence. None can equal Him or supersede His Omnipotence.

Siddhanta understands that the Supreme Lord is one with the Soul, like the Vedanta. But there is a vast difference between the *two* theories of *oneness*. The terms, *Tat Twam Asi* (Thou art That), *Soham* (I am He) are the slogans of the Advaita Vedanta. The Vedanta maintains thereby that the Soul or the Self itself is God, Lord, Brahman, and what not. " I am the soul. I am Brahman: there is nothing but I. I am all, all in all ", says Monism. " Sir ",

retorts the Siddhantin, " if you are Brahman, Lord, God etc., where is the necessity of a creator? You can create the worlds, do the five acts of Grace, and prove your omnipotence! Poor soul, you cannot even control your body, your mind and senses, and your surroundings. You cannot even remember what goes on in sleep. Fate is lurking behind you. You do not know the nature of tomorrow; your intelligence and vision are very limited. And you say, 'I am God, I am the Supreme Brahman, and there is nothing outside Me'. If I say there is a vast universe outside you, you deny it and hold that the objective phenomena are Maya, illusion and snake in the rope etc. Nothing can come out of nothing-*Ex Nihilo Nihil.* There must at least be a rope which your deluded mind takes for a snake. There must at least be a pillar for your deluded imagination to fear as thief. The world is before you. You see it, live in it; you breathe its air, bathe in its waters, eat its food, sleep upon its lap, warm yourself before its fire. The earth was before

you, and shall be after you. Then how dare you deny a truth that you see? You say that, *which is,* is not tomorrow. Yes: the universe changes. It is a chariot of Time. The change is meant for the evolution of beings. The earth is a changing constant. It is not a dream or a falsehood. The very existence of earth connotes the presence of an Omnipotent Master. You and I cannot manage the earth and creation. We cannot even run a kingdom satisfactorily, nor even a home, nor even this body. We are so weak and poor in power. It is the unlimited Force of an omnipotent Lord that does everything according to His omniscient Will. How impertinent is man in claiming equality with that Supreme Lord? The Quoran condemns anything that claims equality with the Divine. The Bible points to a Father in Heaven for the human salvation, and a Guru Jesus as a guide to the Father's throne. Zoroastrianism preaches devotion to the Supreme Ahura Mazdan for the purification and salvation of the soul. In India too, Nanak, Chaitanya, Ramdas,

Kabir, Surdas, Nammalvar, Ramanuja, Madhva, Appar, Patnattar and a number of inspired saints preached devotion to the unique Lord. The majority of prophets have always stressed upon absolute faith in God and surrender to His Will as the way to all goodness and freedom. Even Sankara has sung a good deal of devotional songs: in his *Sivananda Lahari,* " O Lord Shiva, this monkey mind wanders in the forest of delusion . . . ; pray, catch it and firmly tie it to Thy Feet," prays Sankara.

Enough has been said. Man is limited. He is bound by the bondage of I and mine. He cannot claim equality with Shiva, nor can he ever dream of becoming Shiva Himself. Yet the slogan of *Soham* and *Tatvamasi* is as real to the Siddhantin as it is to the Advaitin. Advaita means not two but one to the Vedantin. It is Siddhanta that finds out the true nature of Advaita. To it Advaita means that the Soul and God are not separate but inseparably united even like the sea water and salt, the fruit and its

juice. The salt cannot be sea or water. The juice cannot be the fruit and pulp. They have their own individualities, and yet they are one by closer touch. Even so, the purified soul is embraced by the Lord of Love and in that embrace they become one. The joy of oneness is there. Even there, the soul is soul, God is God. The Lord is ever present in the soul. Without Him, it has no meaning or existence. The fruit has no meaning without the juice. The body cannot exist without life. So the soul cannot exist without the Lord. Every soul is the presence of God. The sum-total of souls is His body. The sun, the moon, the souls, the five elements are all His body. He is inseparably united with every being. That is the real meaning of the term Advaita. Moreover if the Self is one without the second and if it is God, why bother about union, identification, *Jiva Brahma-Iykyam* etc.? There is no union without two things. The whole structure of philosophy falls to the ground, if we do not accept the three entities of God, soul, and the bondage that

stands between them. The other entity is the Divine Maya that grants the soul a body, so that it can finish off all its Karmas and speed Godward. Siddhanta maintains, with the fervour of the Bible and the Alquoran, that God is the one without the second, and that the soul should attain Him through love and grace. The soul is colourless. It takes colour from association. If it associates with the body, the mind and the world, it lowers itself into the ruts and mire of existence, and suffers the fruits of Karmas, and weaves all sorts of bondages around itself. It follows a Divine Teacher, purifies the mind and the inner instruments, it develops moral discipline, and spiritual consciousness; it can day by day shed off Karmas and Samskaras which are past impressions. Day by day the Grace can purify it and draw it Godward and at last reveal its harmony with the Divine and liberate the ties of the lower nature. It is a long process of inner transformation. There are many steps to be ascended before the Divine Union can be had. The Unity of

the Soul with the Lord, and not equal lordship, is the real meaning of Advaita. It is the Divine Grace that manifests itself in the holy ones.

There are three grades of souls. The majority of souls are *Sakalas* fed with the three impurities of Egoism, Karma and Maya (illusion). They are taken through successions of birth and death, and at last initiated and purified by a Guru. The second type of men are called *Pralayakalas*. They have two impurities, Egoism and Karma. God comes in the form of Grace to enlighten them. The superior type of men are the *Vijnana Kalas*. They have egoism alone. God teaches them from within, and purifies them. They are then God-Men or Supermen.

Thus we gather from this sutra that the Lord Shiva is one with the soul. But the soul is not Shiva. Vedanta says Brahman is unique, one without the second and he has no avatara. In the same breath Siddhanta says Shiva is the unique One, and He has no

avatar since He is ever free, birthless, deathless, immaculate. Grace is His body. He is in all, yet above all. He is identified with His Shakti. The Shakti pervades all as His conscious Force. That merciful Grace of the Lord engages Maya Shakti in giving the soul a body, so that it can shed off its Karma by enjoying or suffering its dual results.

The next sutra treats about the *Soul*.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOUL

REVELATION THREE:

The body is the mechanism of nature. A soul dwells in its core. For it responds, "Yes or No". It asserts, "This is my body". It feels the five sensations.

It is conscious of dreams. It does not hunger, nor eat, nor act in deep sleep. It knows when taught.

The human body is a wonderful mechanism. It is made up of the five elements: ether,

air, fire, water, earth; the five rudiments: sound, touch, form, taste and smell; the five sense organs: body, tongue, eye, nose, ear; the five organs of act: hands, feet, mouth, bowels, pudenda; the four inner instruments: mind, intellect, chitta (emotive mind), and egoism. These twenty-four principles are called the 'Ashuddha Tatva' or the impure primary substances that constitute the gross and the subtle human body.

Beyond these, there are the seven conditional elements: Time, Destiny, Power, Knowledge, Desire, Purusha the Individual, and Maya the deluding and multiplying force. These are called the *Shuddha-shuddha Tatvas* or the mixed primary substances. Above these there are the *Shiva Tatvas,* the five principles of Divinity in man: the pure Gnosis, Supremacy, the balance of the forces of knowledge and action (sadakyam), Shakti the Cosmic Energy, Shivam the Bliss Eternal.

The body is not mere skin and bone. There are a thousand subtle things in it, yet unknown to the anatomist. Mere body is not man, nor mere brain substance. Take for instance a corpse. It has all the limbs, the sense organs, the head and the heart. But none of these functions, and all are fast putrifying. Why? The life has gone out of it. That which functioned through these physical and subtle organs, that which saw through the eyes, heard through the ears, thought through the brain, has departed. We can very well know from this common phenomenon, that there must be some higher and puissant principle inside, which enlivens the body. That principle is called the Atman, the Jivan, the Soul, the Self etc. It is neither the body nor the mind. It exists apart. When I say " this is my house ", I am not the house, but I dwell in it. When I say " this is my body ", I am not the body, but I am in it. When I say " this is my eye, nose, tongue, feet, arms, book, work etc.," I am not these things. I am something separate altogether from

them and by my identity and affinity, I say that they are mine. When I observe an object through a telescope, I am different from the lens, from the objective, even from the eye. The eye and the telescope are only instruments of my observation and the thing observed is not I. Even so, the Soul in us is distinct from the body and its environments. The senses cannot feel or act for themselves. The Soul from behind acts through them. The reels of a picture cannot function of their own accord. There must be someone to direct them by a force from behind. So bodies have no existence without the soul that moves them. The body is stretched senseless in deep sleep. But you dream; who dreams in you? When you wake up you say, "I slept well and I had dreams". Who dreamt? There is surely something in the background that dreams and knows that it dreams. It is the soul. In deep sleep everything except the involuntary respiration is still. I respire; I am not the respiratory organ. "I" the soul is something distinct, not the body, not

sensorium, not the vital breath; I am an entity distinct. I run the mechanism by a force and yet I am not the machine. I am the soul.

But the soul is not all; it is not all-in-all. The machine and the motive force are not all. There must be a driver, a master, apart from both, that directs the mechanism. The soul cannot see in the dark. There must be light. The soul cannot see or feel two things at a time. 'One by one' is its rule. It forgets the one, when it goes to the other. Remembrance and forgetfulness are in its very nature. It is not an all-comprehensive intelligence. There must be an omniscient Force behind it. That Force is the Divine. The Divine is all-intelligence, all-pervading, all-powerful. The soul is different from all the principles (Tatvas) of the human mechanism; it is different even from the life breath that keeps on, awake or asleep. Even so, the *Divine* is distinct from the *Soul*.

All the Indian philosophies accept the three fundamental truths of God, Soul and Matter. The difference lies in their relationship. The extreme monism maintains the dictum, ' None, nothing, but ' I '. For it, ' I ', the Self, is unique; there is no God beyond it. There is no bondage, no impurity, no material entanglement for the self. All these are imaginations of the ignorant mind which killed, I remain as I am, the Brahman. But in practice, this does not hold its ground. The soul is not able to rise above the tangles of mental egoism, vital desires, and physical inertia. There is imperfection in its very nature. It is covered by the thick sheath of ignorance. It is caught in the current of Karma, the law of causation. The mind and the body are its hypotheses, and God is its conclusion. The soul is involved in Maya, the cosmic matter called *Asat*. It is like an ignorant child. The Divine Grace, like a mother, protects it and bears it up the ladder of evolution. The soul exists because God exists in it. It is like a fish in the waters of

God-consciousness. God is like the sun. The mind is like the eye and the soul is the seer. It has no sight without Light, though it may possess eyes. God wants nothing. He is all-in-all. Out of deep mercy for the soul, to evolve it from the vale of tears to His Bliss, God, through His Conscious-Force pervades the soul everywhere. The Mayashakti which is the hand-maid of His Conscious Force, gives the soul a material and subtle body, a world and a faculty for enjoyment. It is an act of Grace to purify the soul, allowing it to know the true value of things through experience. The soul by itself is neither this nor that, God nor matter, *sat* nor *asat*. It occupies a middle position. It is sat-asat. When it finds or realises its union with the Divine, it is Divine-Sat; it enjoys the bliss, the purity, the peace, and the rapture of Divinity. In conjunction with *asat,* the maya, the material world, it is tossed by the counter-currents of dualities and suffers the result. The Divine Grace throws it again and again into the furnace of birth, in order to remove

its dross and stain, and make it a pure ornament for the Divine. The soul does not realise the Divine Lord who is its very support, who is nearer to it than breath and who is always inseparable. For it identifies itself with the body and remains centre-out and wanders with the outgoing mind.

The next sutra proves its relation with the mind.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INNER INSTRUMENTS

REVELATION FOUR:

The soul is none of the Anta-Karanas (the Inner Instruments). The soul does not feel shrouded by egoism. It is cognizant only in conjunction with the Inner Instruments, just as the king knows the state affairs through his ministers. Similar is the relation of the soul with the five planes of experience too.

Antakarana is the inner instrument through which the soul acts in the world of matter.

Mind, intellect, emotive mind (chitta) and egoism (Akankara) are the four constituent principles of the inner instrument. Mind or manas thinks. Intellect reasons and discriminates. Chitta stores up impressions, and egoism asserts its conclusion. Antakaranas are the faculties of these fourfold acts of the mental being (the manomaya-purusha). They think, reason, wander with impressions, and assert themselves only when awake and in dreams. Manas, chitta and ahankara perceive and feel sensations. Manas is the sensorium. It is the bedrock of dualities. Chitta brings into play the sense impressions. Ahankara wrongly concludes. These are the elements that raise a storm in the being and perturb its settled peace. Bhuddhi or the Intellect is the higher instrument that discriminates between right and wrong and is the chief minister of the soul. Other ministers gather informations. The four ministers (instruments) have separate functions; one cannot interfere in the work of the other. They do not know each other. Only the king, the

soul, knows the four. The ministers are nil without the king. The Antakaranas do not act in deep sleep. So they cannot be the soul which endures and is wakeful always. The soul is covered by Ahankara or dark egoism. In deep sleep, it cannot feel the object or even the body. It cannot sense. It feels and functions only when it comes in contact with the inner-instruments. So it is distinct from the instruments just as an artist is distinct from his tools, and a king from his ministers.

The soul in the body undergoes five experiences; they are called *Avastas* or the states of consciousness, which are explained hereunder:

1. In *Jagra* or wakefulness, the soul lives in the physical consciousness. All its material principles are active. Its consciousness is objectivised.
2. In *Swapna* or dream state, the ten external senses (the five senses of feeling and the five of action) lose their faculties. The mind is wakeful. It dreams since the chitta

brings into play all the past impressions. The soul lives then in the mental consciousness. In *Jagra* the soul has its abode in the forehead; in swapna in the throat.

3. In *Sushupti* or deep sleep, the soul living in the heart, has only three principles—body, life and chitta. The soul exists in the *karana-sareera* or the causal body. The senses and the mind do not operate now.

4. In *Turya* or the state of super-consciousness, the soul rests in the naval. Two principles—*Purusha* (the soul), and *Prana* (the vital breath)—alone exist there. The rest is sunk in oblivion.

5. In *Turyatita* or the ultra-conscious state, the atman alone exists. Everything else is swallowed up by that transcendence. This is the original state before evolution.

Let us now go to the next sutra which reveals the relation between God, Soul and the body.

CHAPTER IX

THE DOUBLE CONTACT OF THE SOUL

REVELATION FIVE:

The senses perceive and carry impressions of external objects to the mind. But they cannot know themselves, nor do they know the soul. The soul perceives through the senses and the mind. But similarly, it cannot know itself nor God. It is the Divine Grace, (the Chit-Shakti) that actuates it, just like a magnet which activates iron.

We have already seen the ' Tatvas ' or the constituent principles of our being through

which the maya shakti stimulates evolution. All those Tatvas act by the soul. No Tatva functions in a soulless body. The Tatvas act on account of the soul. For instance the senses feel not by themselves but through something that is behind them. Mere spectacles cannot see anything. It is the eye that sees through the spectacles. Even so mere eye cannot see and know. There is a seer that sees through the eyes and knows the object. It is the soul. The same relation exists between the soul and God. The Soul exists in the Lord by His Will. It is His Almighty Energy that acts in the soul. It is His Knowledge-Force (Jnana-Shakti) that thinks and reasons and knows. It is His Will Power (Ichcha-Shakti) that is the volition in the soul. Not an atom moves without His Will. The soul *is*, because *He is* in the soul. He is the life of lives, the self of selves, the Omniscient Knower behind all knowledge, the absolute Bliss behind all joys. He is the veiled Master of the being. He is the sustaining Witness and His very presence moves forces to action.

The soul in bondage is limited, ignorant, helpless; it can know neither itself, nor God. The perfect Intelligence behind, moves it. Then alone it knows. The lower cannot know the higher. Submission to the higher is its only recourse. The body cannot know the vital, the vital the mental, the mental the soul, and the soul God. One cannot become the other. The soul cannot become God. The soul has a double contact—one with the maya-shakti below, and the other with God above. It is like a needle between two magnets. If it unites with the lower material forces, it turns in the whirl of dualities and suffers births and pangs. If it detaches from the lower attractions, and attaches itself to the Feet of God who is its very life, it can shed off karma and egoism and enjoy bliss. The Soul must take refuge in the Divine Grace which gives it life and living. This utter surrender is the sole way of salvation.

The next sutra reveals the nature of God.

CHAPTER X

SIVA SAT

REVELATION SIX:

Sense perceptions are Asat (mutable). That which is not so perceived, has no existence. God is neither Asat nor Nihil. He is Shiva-Sat, (or Chit-Sat). He is Bliss-Truth: He is Truth-consciousness. He is Shiva when realised by the human intelligence, and He is pure Sat or Truth when seen in the light of intuition.

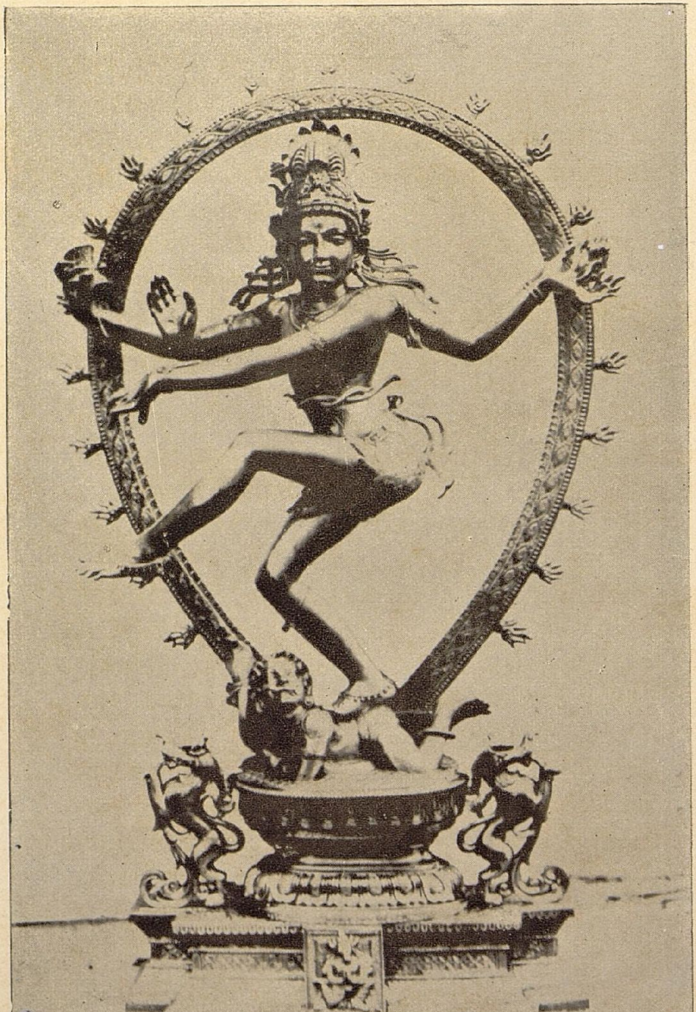
All objects of perception are bound to birth, growth, and decay. They are like

cloud-forms and dream-shapes. Time changes and devours all. The soul knows objects only when it is in contact with the mind and the senses. If not, it cannot know things and they do not exist for it.

God cannot be perceived nor known by the mental being. He is beyond the ken of sensorium. The soul must merge into Him its separate individuality, its ego-consciousness. It must make a perfect surrender to His Grace, and melt in prayer. Through love and devotional prayer, the Grace opens the inner eye to a higher vision, a vision beyond mind. Through the vision of Grace, the soul sees the Light that leads to the Lord. God is neither a mutable object, nor a nonentity. He is Sat the Truth: He is Shiva, the All-Blissful. Chit or the Conscious Force is His power of manifestation. This force is called Grace, Knowledge, Will, Energy. To attain this Grace is the first step to realisation. That is why sages call God *Shiva-Sat* or the Truth attained as the Conscious-Bliss. They call Him the *Chit-*

Sat or the Truth attained through His Conscious-Grace. He has no mortal birth or body. He is not subject to the law of evolution. It is His Will that turns the wheel of progressive evolution. He is not known by the limited little-minded creature-knowledge (pasu-jnanam). He is known only through the Divine wisdom inspired by His Grace (Pati Jnanam or Arul Jnanam). The child Jnana-Sambanda knew Shiva only after drinking the milk of His Grace.

This does not mean that God should not be meditated upon or worshipped in a chosen form. God is omnipresent. The five elements, the sun, the moon, and all the souls are His embodiments. These are the fountains of life here. God is beyond imagination, perception, conception, sensation. He is beyond words. Even the *Vedas*, unable to express Him, hush their voice in peace. God is nameless, formless, featureless, measureless, limitless, endless. But He is present in all: He is the male in man, the female in woman, the darling in the child.



SRI NATARAJAH

He is love in the heart. He is immanent in all Nature. He is the tune in the harp, the fragrance in blossoms, the light in the sun, the coolness in the moon, the heat in the flame, the sound in ether, the smell in earth. He cannot be caught by the mind. He is caught in heart's devotion. Many are His glories. His glories are symbolised in idols, in words and forms and ideas. To adore any of them is idolatory. No religion is an exception to this. *Islam* does not conceive a form for Him. But it builds a mosque for Him; it faces His *Caba* in worship. It adores Him in the form of prayer. The Sikh religion does not adore form, but adores the word, builds symbolic temples. *Saivism* adores Him in all aspects. It worships His cosmic dance, His creative play (leela) in the form of *Nataraja.* It adores His silent omniscient Wisdom in the form of Dhakshina-Murti. It adores His Shiva-Shakti aspect in the form of Shiva-lingam. Nataraja is a perfect symbolic representation of the Divine glory and works. The image is full of Grace and wonderful

beauty. It holds a drum representing the creative sound from which everything proceeds. The Veda too says : "Brahman is Om, the creative sound, and from *that* everything came." The other hand of Nataraja bears the fire of conscious-force through which everything is effected. Fire is a sacred symbol of worship to the Vedic Hindus and the Zoroastrians. One hand rises to protect devotees. A foot planted well crushes egoism and squeezes out all sins; the other foot lifted up grants Bliss to the surrendering soul. Thus all the images in our temples are artistic and visual symbols of divine glory. They are there not to supersede God, but to aid the mind in meditation. They are like kindergarten gifts to spiritual children. There is no religion that has not got some such symbols. Word, form, building, prayer-book—all are definite symbols. So, let none cry down temples. Whether they worship in churches, mosques, synagogues, stupas, mandirs or any-where in God's limitless space under the sky, they adore God, and that in their

heart. All symbols are images of the heart's love. Without that, worship is worth nothing. When one worships Nataraja or a *lingam*, it is not the brass or stone, but the Truth symbolised in them, that he worships.

The next sutra explains how the soul is a factor between God the Sat, and Maya the Asat.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOUL IS SAT-ASAT

REVELATION SEVEN:

Before Sat everything is non-apparent. Sat cannot experience Asat. Asat cannot know Sat. The soul perceives both. It is neither Sat nor Asat.

Darkness ceases to exist before the sun. Asat ceases to be before the Sat, Shiva. He is the sun of supreme knowledge. Darkness cannot know, cannot stand before light. The Asat or the material *maya* cannot perceive God. Knowledge does not stoop to

ignorance, and ignorance cannot perceive knowledge. Sat and Asat are poles apart. One is; the other has no foothold. But the soul is neither of them. It sees both. It makes a double contact with both. It is like a colourless clean prism. It has a double perception. We have already explained its double contact. It is co-eternal with Shiva. When it realises this union, it enjoys Bliss. But something stands in the way of realisation. The soul is pulled down by lower natures to pasa or ignorant bondage. The soul in union with Asat, suffers bondages and pains, and loses its identity with God. It should rise above pasa or bondage and take to the feet of Shiva. Then it shall blossom into divinity and radiate divine smile and perfume. The first sadhana for the soul is to separate itself from the lower nature, from Asat, and lift its heart in prayer to the Sat, the Shiva.

The next sutra reveals how the soul can attain the wisdom of God.

CHAPTER XII

THE MASTER

REVELATION EIGHT:

When the soul is sufficiently advanced in the askesis of devotion (Tapasya), the Supreme Lord comes in the form of a divine master. He instructs the soul: "O Soul, thou hast fallen into the hands of the five-sensed hunters; growing among them, thou hast forgotten the Lord who is thy very core. Awake!" The soul wakes up to reality, renounces all attachments

to senses. It devotes itself unreservedly and uniquely to Hara and attains His Blessed Feet.

The soul by itself is neutral, colourless. It takes the colour of the environments. Its nature changes by association. It is like a parrot. A parrot in a holy ashram speaks out names of God. A parrot in a hunter's home knows the names of dogs and weapons. Water is colourless and tasteless. In association with sugar, it becomes sweet, with salt it becomes salt. Even so, the soul in association with the distracting senses, becomes sensual. The senses wander in the world; they drag the mind behind them. To control them is very difficult. They run wild. They are merciless hunters. They hunt after sex-pleasure and egoistic possessions. They are selfish, self-seeking, and destroy peace. The eye sees a thing, attachment grows, desire for it increases; anything that stands in the way is hated; hatred brings perturbation, and that shatters peace, and that destroys life. So every

scripture lays stress upon control of the senses as a necessary step towards God-Realisation. But a Guru is necessary to disentangle the soul from the meshes of the senses. Who can be that Guru except the Divine Grace? God, through the vastness of His Grace, comes as a Guru, and instructs the Soul. He shows the vanity of sensual pleasures. He says: "These five senses are hunters. Temptation is their noose. They catch hold of your mind and heart, and enslave your being. They prison you in the cage of bondage and misery. Off! Fly away from them. Kick off their temptations! Devote yourself to Me, the Lord of your being. Know that I am in you, always. I am your reality." The soul wakes up and knows the Asat that drags it down, and the Divine Grace that lifts it up to Sat or Shiva. Hara is the gracious Guru who removes all its illusions and bondages by the outpour of His Grace into the soul. The soul must be receptive, pure, loving, plastic, detached from the hostile senses; it must worship,

pray, chant, meditate, and live in communion with the Lord who is its very life. This is *Yoga, life in communion with the Lord.* By this, the evolution of the soul is quickened. The soul one day realises that the Lord is its sole refuge. He is everything, everywhere. He is inseparable from it. Like tears in emotion, like the mother's milk in filial love, the Grace of God manifests to the Lover in the abundance of His Love. Through love, the Lover becomes the Beloved. Shiva is identified with Love. Realising this identity, the soul enters the Feet of God and lives there in divine bliss.

The surgeon waits for the wound to ripen before operation. The Lord allows time for the soul to grow in devotion through *tapasya.* Two things have to be effected before the descent of Grace : (1) Balancing the good and bad *karmas* so that neither of them disturbs the spiritual equipoise; (2) Maturity of the binding impurities. These two are achieved partly by moral and religious practices (*Charya* and

kriya). After this the mind must be withdrawn from the senses, and concentrated on the Lord. Yoga is not an end in itself. It is a means. It is just a beginning. It is the dedication of the mind to devotion. It is a means to the next step *Jnanam*. God knows when and how to illumine the soul. He is there always. His touch is alchemic. Like a blind man recovering his sight, like a tired pilgrim reaching the temple, the soul after all sees the Light, knows the Guide, walks His path and reaches His Feet. We have already referred to the three types of souls, *sakalas, pralayakalas* and *vijnanakalas,* and the way the Lord deals with them respectively.

In the next sutra, the Saint Maikandar reveals how the soul is purified through *mantra.*

CHAPTER XIII

THE MANTRA

REVELATION NINE:

The Lord cannot be seen by carnal eyes, by the senses. The eye of knowledge must open. Thought must fix in it. Bondage of the lower nature must be left off as mirage. Then the soul finds shelter in God. To attain this blissful state, the soul should meditate upon the mantra— "Namah Shivaya" ("नमः शिवाय").

Mantra japa is a powerful means of steadying the mind and communing with the

Divine. The mantra starts where the breath rises, where the soul abodes, where the Lord dances—in the central core of the being, just at the tip of the chest bone. Mantra done with concentration, brings all spiritual virtues. The object of all mantra is Bliss. Shiva is the fountain of Bliss as His name connotes. He is the source of all goodness. One's surrender to Him wins His Grace which is omnipotent. " Namah Shivaya " is the mantra of self-surrender. This is a very powerful mantra. It has given salvation to Nandideva, Tirumula, Satyadharshi, Vagisa, Jnanasambandar, Maniccavachakar and a host of devotees from time immemorial. In Tamil and Sanskrit, this mantra has five letters and hence it is called '*Panchakshari*'. This mantra can be counted in a rosary. The Bhakta must repeat at least 108 times this mantra in the morning after ablution, before dinner, and in the evening before the sanctum of a temple or at the Feet of the Guru. This mantra must be imbibed from a Guru. The mind must identify itself

with the meaning of the mantra, and the repetition must become natural like the heart-beat. The sadhak must banish all worldly thoughts, mental worries and family troubles, and keep his *chitta* pure and serene, fixed on the object of meditation. Temple-worship and japa before Shiva in the temple promote concentration and inner purity. By concentrating oneself upon the thought, " I am Thine, O Shiva; I surrender my all unto Thee. Let Thy omniscient Will be done ", all mental ignorance, vital ego, and physical inertia corrode day by day, and the soul becomes pure like a crystal. The pasa or bondage of ego, delusion and karma that bind fast the soul, snap asunder. The heart-lotus becomes the seat of God. As fire appears when two stones are struck, as the butter emerges out of the churned milk, and as light flashes when the electric button is switched on, even so the knowledge of Shiva manifests in the sadak's heart, purified by the mantra ' Nama Shivaya '. The mind-wandering stops; senses gather in; the waves of chitta calm

down. The physical sight turns heartward. The inner eye of Grace opens. The Lord is revealed. His Truth is felt. The soul, completely cut off from asat, from pasa, from worldly desires and karmas, gradually realises Shiva who is ever present in it like juice in a fruit and fire in the wood. At that stage, the soul enjoys *advaita bhava.* It is the consciousness of its united existence in Shiva, and proclaims "Sivoham, Soham, the real 'I' is He, Shiva. He alone is. I am merged in Him."

The next sutra throws more light upon this *at-one-ment.*

CHAPTER XIV

AT-ONE-MENT

REVELATION TEN:

Shiva is one with the soul. The soul must merge its individuality, become one with Him and do His Will; then there shall be no stain of maya and karma left in its immaculate self.

Shiva is always one with the soul. He is the soul's Self, the quintessence of the being. His presence pulsates in the entire

being. The soul must feel this unity and likewise unite with the Lord in utter self-surrender, leaving no margin for egoism. It must think of Him alone. For He alone is all in all. He alone is worth thinking. The soul must mutter His name, His glory, and must not waste time in bagatelles. For His name purifies the soul. His glory edifies life. The soul must serve His will. It must do work as worship. Consecrated work purifies the being. Thus purified, the soul sheds off all evils, all karmas and delusions that weave around it the net of bondages. The soul at this stage forgets its ego personality altogether. It climbs to the highest summit of evolution from which it sees Shiva not only in the self but also in everything equally. There it realises the mantra *Sivamayam, Brahmamayam.* Its thoughts are god-inspired, its speech comes out of His Grace, and its acts are God's through His instrumentality. It feels its very breath to be God's. The soul enjoys limitless freedom in the limitless One.

But even in this identification, the soul must not be mistaken for the Lord. The union is like that of the star devoured by the sunlight, like that of the fire glowing in the iron, and like salt dissolved in water. The soul's love and surrender to the Lord must always be there.

The next sutra explains this further.

CHAPTER XV

THE FEET OF HARA

REVELATION ELEVEN:

The soul sees and enables the eye to see. Even so the Hara sees, knows and enables the soul to see and know. The soul by ceaseless devotion attains the Feet of Hara.

We have already seen that the physical eye cannot see without the aid of the soul. It knows not that it sees. The soul is conscious of its seeing, while it sees through the eye. Such is the Lord in the soul. The soul

cannot see or know the Lord who is all knowing, all seeing, all intelligence. It is Hara who out of His mercy dwells in the soul, evolves it higher and higher, cleans it of the dross of desire, egoism, delusion and karma, and gently drags it inward and manifests His inseparable union. The lotus opens only to the sun-rays; the lily only to the cool rays of the moon. The soul opens only by God's grace. Light alone chases away night. God's effulgence alone drives off the ignorance that covers the soul. The soul is ever obliged to the Lord. It is His eternal slave, servant, instrument. Its love for the Lord must pour in ceaseless streams of fervour. Egoism is shattered by this fervour, and the soul is automatically drawn to the Lord's Feet where it takes refuge peacefully.

The next sutra states what the Siddha should do after this at-one-ment.

CHAPTER XVI

HARA IN THE HOLY

REVELATION TWELVE:

The three-fold evils (malas) prevent the soul from attaining the virtuous, puissant Feet of Hara. After washing off their stains, the liberated soul should keep the company of devotees, full of devotion, devoid of delusion and worship the forms and images in temples as Hara Himself.

The 'Feet of Hara' is the home of all virtues. 'It' is powerful, strong in protecting devotees. It is ever ready to give

salvation. But the soul would not think of it, would not approach it. Why? The evils of self-sufficient egoism, ignorance, delusion, dualities, the store of past karmas,—all these bar its advance. By tapasya, devotion and grace, these barricades are removed. The soul is purified. It sees its way and goes straight to the Lord's Feet which are its refuge. After this purification and god-attainment, the free soul should not suppose that it has no business with *sadhana*. The soul must always be on the watch. The rust awaits the copper. The evil (mala) is always ready to stain the soul. So it should keep company with holy devotees. They are *sadhus* that have got rid of egoism, illusion and vain glory. They live in the Lord and see His Will in everything. They live in union with Him. So they must be considered as Shiva himself. He is every form. Nothing can take form without His Will. The skin and bone are superficial. The Lord is the Omnipresent Reality inside everything. So He must be adored in forms too. Association with true devotees

increases knowledge and fans the fire of God-love. The saint's body is a Temple of God. It must be worshipped. Similarly the *mukta* in the company of sadhus should make pilgrimage to Holy temples. Every image enshrined in temples, is a symbol of the Divine attribute, as we have already said. So temple images must be worshipped as Shiva. For, the worship of *Shivalingam* is a great purifier of the soul. Shivalingam is a symbol of the supreme God as the master of Shakti, the creative Energy. 'Lingam' is worshipped in this land from the prehistoric period, and even now in all temples from Cape to Mount, we see the lingam. Rama, Arjuna, Vali, Sadashiva-Brahmam, and a host of saints worshipped Shivalingam. The initiate worships Shivalingam to purify and sanctify his soul. The Jivan-mukta adores Shivalingam to keep his liberated spirit intact, to preserve and conserve the Bliss he has attained, and to intensify his surrender and devotion to the Omnipotent God.

These are *the Revelations of Meikandar.* They are the essence of religions. They are the Truth of the soul, of the universe and of God. They harmonise everything in God. They lead man step by step from the vale of tears to the height of Bliss where the soul can find its identity with the Divine who is ' Satchidananda '. They are Revelations of Love and Light. They give the soul the highest freedom of Divine living; at the same time they keep the fire of devotion alive.

Let us raise our heart in prayer to *Hara* who is the the master of our soul, and fix our faith in His Grace:

" Omnipotent Hara, glory to Thee! Glory to Thy saints! Glory to Meikandar, Appar, Sambandar, and Manickavachakar! Supreme Shiva, give us more and more of Thy love. Pour into us more and more of Thy Energy. Let Thy Truth—Light descend into us brighter and ever brighter and chase off the thick gloom of our mental being. Let us live in Thee, to do Thy Will. O Killer of the ' asuric ' forces, kill envy, littleness, doubt, arrogance, and self-sufficient vanity in our mind, and

purify our souls. Let us be true vehicles of Thy Grace, torch-bearers of Thy Truth, and heroes of Thy Faith. Off fear; off doubt and despair! O Shiva, there Thou art ever united in the soul, the life of our lives, the core of our being, the essence of our spirit! O Mercy, let nothing stand in the way of our realising this identity! Let all mind-wanderings cease; Lord, we have seen the world and its nature; we have seen its pleasures, vain hope, deluding mirage! Lord, we anchor our faith at Thy gracious feet. There we find true peace, blissful shelter! Keep us ever attached to Thy feet, O Lord, and save us from temptations. Thou art real. To realise Thee in us is peace. To live in union with Thee is real Bliss! *Om, Namah Shivaya! Shivoham, Shivamayam!"*

FINI